

Testimony before the Human Services Committee
Tuesday March 5, 2013
S.B. Bill 1023 Revenue Retention for Non-Profits/S.B. Bill 1026 Adequate Provider Networks
Kristen Tierney

Good Afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee.

I'm testifying today in support of Bills 1023 and 1026.

Bill 1023: Non-profits are vitally important to our mental health care system in Connecticut. When closing our state run mental health hospitals in the 1990's the Legislature did so stating that non-profits in our state were better equipped to handle this demographic and with a promise of funding. This funding is vitally important to their ability to operate.

Our non-profits operate on a shoestring and offer desperately needed support services to our loved ones who suffer from mental illness. As long as Non-Profits comply with our state regulations and reporting, and provide quality care by complying with contractual performance requirements, please allow them to retain any extra funds; they will be put to good use.

Bill 1026: Due to budget cuts Bridgeport Mental Health has gone from offering counseling to low income families from five to two days a week. As a result, there are now waiting lists. This is neither adequate nor acceptable mental health care. Having children and families wait 6 weeks between appointments is unacceptable under any successful mental health care model.

We need to have acceptable and accessible mental health services that are properly funded. The Legislature is looking at Bill 374 later this week which will legislate the screening of each child in our public school system, therefore identifying more children and families in need—with no place to go. That is not a model for success.

Throughout this Legislative session our state psychiatric and mental health professionals, service providers and caregiving families have testified to the dire need of more mental health professionals in our state, better reimbursement and easier access. Thank you for your continued funding and support of mental health services in CT.